
PHILOSOPHY OF AESTHETICS in Fall 2019 (PL3074)

Course Code	PL3074	Professor(s)	Oliver Feltham
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	GL19
Class Schedule	MR: 10:35-11:55 in G-113	Office Hours	Mondays and Thursdays 16h00-17h00
Credits	4	Email	ofeltham@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	618

Course Description

What is Art? What is Beauty? How can I know what is beautiful? And what does it mean to me? These are some of Aesthetics' main questions as it is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and value of art and the criteria of artistic judgment and experience. Various answers have been given throughout the history of philosophy, from Plato and Aristotle to Kant and today's analytical or postmodern philosophy, making of aesthetics a vibrant and dynamic discipline, constantly revitalised by new art forms and critical concepts. Through a thorough historical survey of the notion students learn to discuss art and beauty in a time when these classical notions are undergoing very important changes. Everyone is encouraged to bring in his or her own experience of art. There is no prerequisite for this course.

Course Learning Outcomes

Identify and compare concepts, theses and arguments between at least two different philosophical approaches to aesthetics.

Reflectively apply aesthetic concepts and questions to phenomena and discourses outside philosophy.

Distinguish between different historical approaches to aesthetics.

Construct bridges between philosophical aesthetics and neighboring disciplines such as art history and art theory, film studies, comparative literature, visual culture studies, or semiotics.

Write an analytic and argumentative essay that answers a rich question in the field of aesthetics.

General Education

[PLEASE EDIT OR REMOVE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AS APPLICABLE]

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the [INDICATE THE REQUIREMENT(S) FULFILLED BY THE COURSE] requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

[INDICATE THE GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES]

Course Outline

PL/AH3074 Philosophy and Aesthetics

CLASS SCHEDULE Fall 2019

Week I

Session 1 Monday 2nd September — Introduction to Aesthetics

Session 2 Thursday 5th September — Contemporary figures of appearance

Reading: Baumgarten, from *Anthology*

September 8th— last day to drop/add courses online

Week II

Session 3 Monday 9th September — Poetry and theatre vs justice in Plato's *Republic*

Reading:- Book II 376c-Bk III, 403c(in particular 395a-397e) on the education of the guardians and censorship of poetry; *mimesis*(imitation) as major threat to the order of the city

- Allegory of the Cavern, Bk VII, 516e-517a

- Theory of ideas, sensible copies and simulacra, Bk X, 595a-598d

Session 4 Thursday 12th September — Enthusiasm, poetry and the ladder of love in Plato's *Ion* & the *Symposium*

Reading: Plato's *Ion* beginning-536d, Plato's *Symposium*, 201d-212a

Week III

Session 5 Monday 16th September — Aristotle on theatre and poetry as the imitation of action

Reading: Aristotle's *Poetics* – extract in Chapt 2 of the Anthology

Session 6 Thursday 19th September — Aristotle on why we enjoy watching tragedies

Reading: Aristotle's *Poetics* – extract in Chapt 2 of the Anthology

Week IV

Session 7 Monday 23rd September — Shaftesbury on historical painting

Reading: Shaftesbury, "A Notion of the Historical Draught of Hercules" (Blackboard hyperlink to Oxford UP digital edition)

Session 8 Thursday 26th September — Shaftesbury on the modern debate between sceptics, atheists and religious enthusiasts

Reading: *The Moralists*, Part I. (Blackboard hyperlink to Oxford UP digital edition)

Week V

Session 9 Monday 30th — Shaftesbury's theory of beauty, the analytic and dialectic of nature

Reading: *The Moralists*, Part II

Session 10 Thursday 3rd October — Shaftesbury's theogony: nature as God's work of art & the articulation of aesthetics and morality

Reading: *The Moralists*, Part III

Week VI

Session 11 Monday 7th October — Shaftesbury's pragmatics: public debate and liberal education

Reading: *Sensus Communis or an Essay on Wit* (Blackboard hyperlink to Oxford UP digital edition)

Session 12 Thursday 10th October — Hutcheson's theory of perception, pleasure and beauty

Reading: Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* Part 1, Sections I-IV pp.8-45. Some of this extracted in a chapter in the Anthology. The entire text available in digital edition from AUP library via a Blackboard link.

Week VII

Session 13 Monday 14th October — Hutcheson on aesthetics as a prolegomena to morality

Reading: Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* Part 1, Sections V pp.46-60

Session 14 Thursday 17th October — David Hume on standards of taste and the problem of tragedy

Reading: Chapt 17 of the Anthology, "Of the Standard of Taste", Blackboard pdf "Of Tragedy"

October 16th, Mid-semester, October 18th, Mid-semester grades due

Week VIII

Session 15 Monday 21st October — Burke's theory of the passions, of beauty

Reading: Chapt 16 of the Anthology, Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*

Session 16 Thursday 24th October — Burke's theory of the sublime, critique of taste as hierarchy

Reading: Chapt 16 of the Anthology, Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*

Week IX

Session 17 Monday 28th October — Kant's analytic of judgements of beauty

Reading: Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §1-22

October 30th– November 3rd, fall break (no classes)

Week X

Session 18 Monday 4th November — Kant's analytic and dialectic of judgements of the sublime

Reading: Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §23-29

November 4th, last day to withdraw from a course /no credit option

Session 19 Thursday 7th November — Kant on the powers of the imagination in ordinary life, and in the hands of an artist

Reading: Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §31-39

Week XI

November 11th– 12th, Armistice Break (no classes)

Session 20 Thursday 14th November — Hegel on the fine arts

Week XIII

Session 21 Monday 18th November — Hegel on the fine arts

Session 22 Thursday 21st November — Marx on the commodity and Baudelaire on modernity

Week XIV

Session 23 Monday 25th November — Walter Benjamin on the work of art

Session 24 Thursday 28th November — Revision

Week XV

Session 25 Monday 2nd December — Revision

December 6th, last day of classes,

December 7th - 11th, reading days

December 12th – 18th, Final Exams

January 2nd, all grades due

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
The Bloomsbury Companion to Aesthetics	Joseph J. Tanke & Colin McQuillan	Bloomsbury Books (Continuum)	9781441138262	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will

receive an “F” for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

- 1) Short essay reconstructing an argument and a concept from Plato or Aristotle (1000-1500 words) due at the end of Week 3, Thursday 19th September = 15%
- 2) Midterm exam reconstructing and contextualizing key concepts and arguments from the readings = 15%
- 3) Research essay developing a critical interpretation of one of more of our philosopher-aestheticians which answers a philosophical question that you have developed (2500-3000 words), and which draws on primary and pertinent secondary literature, due at the end of Week 11 on Thursday 14th November = 30%
- 4) Final exam testing your retention of what you learnt during the semester = 20%
- 5) Attendance and active participation in class discussion and group work = 20%

Other
